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26 May 1965

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD  
COMMITTEE ON DOCUMENTATION

Task Team III Report on Need for  
and Procurement of Foreign Publications

1. Attached report presents the Team's conclusions on the preliminary issue of need, prior to investigation of Community efforts toward processing and exploitation of foreign publications. The establishment of an interim working group on procurement of hard-to-get items is recommended.

(See recommendations pgs. 4-5)

2. This will be an agenda item for the next (to be scheduled) meeting, for discussion and approval.

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Secretary

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UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD  
COMMITTEE ON DOCUMENTATION

TASK TEAM III - FOREIGN PUBLICATIONS

Report on the Need for and Procurement of Foreign Publications

A. Need for Foreign Publications. The Team first set out to determine the extent of need for foreign publications in intelligence work by querying extensively production offices as well as collectors and reference people. Their replies make clear that the primary usage of foreign publications is for intelligence production purposes. The economists are very strong on this point. They say "Foreign publications are a primary source for production of economic intelligence. Their importance varies with subject and geographic region, but generally they provide from 60 to 90 per cent of Economic Research Area source material. Specifically they provide about 80 per cent of source material on the USSR and 90 per cent on Eastern Europe." In a similar vein the military note that "DIA considers foreign publications to be a vital source of intelligence and, in many subject areas, exploitation of this source is an absolute necessity to the successful production of responsive intelligence."

The geographic people show an extensive need in their reply "Foreign publications are used extensively in all geographic intelligence research and production. For certain types of USSR studies they represent the best and sometimes the only source of data. Even where least used, in non-Bloc European studies, foreign publications provide [redacted] source materials." Similarly the Science and Technology components of the Community note "Foreign scientific and technical publications and news articles are used extensively as sources for intelligence production. The information derived from these sources enhances the value and facilitates the interpretation of information obtained by other means. In the case of the Office of Scientific Intelligence components engaged in research on basic foreign research and development, foreign scientific and technical publications comprise [redacted] background material." For current intelligence purposes we find a varied usefulness ranging from "absolutely essential-widely used" on the USSR to "little used" on W. Europe. The whole range is summed up neatly by the Chairman of the Board of National Estimates when he writes "The pattern of foreign publications

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usefulness is varied. Except for certain exotic items in military and other fields, [REDACTED]

analysis efforts -- and in the case of foreign policy matters, almost our sole source. We also value Western European publications for their infor-

In addition to the solid need for foreign publications in intelligence production, we find many other uses. For example, the photographs contained in foreign publications are used "to supplement and complement aerial photography." Many publications are used for background information and research. Other uses are in clandestine operations where publications in some areas "are particularly important for identifying targets for operations, for evaluating the effectiveness of our operations, and for the planning of new approaches to our targets." Still other uses include leads which generate collection requirements, support to mapping and charting projects and proper identification of targets for aerial photography purposes.

B. Procurement of Foreign Publications. The major channel at present for procurement of foreign publications for use by the Intelligence Community is the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Other channels used in varying degrees are the military attaches, commercial dealers (including direct-to-publisher arrangements) and exchange arrangements. Indirect [REDACTED] channels are used to a relatively minor extent for "hard-to-get" publications.

CIA relies most heavily on the PPO system, obtaining about 93% of its publications through this channel. The State Department uses the PPO system whenever commercial means are not available. The procedures for the procurement of foreign publications for the intelligence components of the Defense Department are currently undergoing a change. DIA is in the process of establishing a "system" approach for all DoD intelligence activities which will:

1. Make the PPO system a primary source of DoD foreign publications;
2. Make DoD overt collectors a back-up and supplementary system for the PPO's, as required;
3. Provide for the use of direct commercial arrangements for procurement of publications when such is advantageous from either a financial or timely standpoint;
4. Insure that the entire Intelligence Community is aware of the "take" through these systems.

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Up to the time of these changes, Army and Navy intelligence production units, as well as those of DIA, have relied primarily on the military attaches and field commands for the procurement of publications. The Air Force, however, has had an effective systematic approach in operation, utilizing a combination of the various procedures for procurement, including the PPO's, attaches, commercial sources and exchange arrangements (available through Library of Congress cooperation). DIA is currently taking steps to redirect this Air Force effort in the field of scientific and technical intelligence to meet the needs of Army, Navy and DIA itself. NSA has relied heavily on the PPO system but has also used other systems.

The adequacy of the present procurement effort varies considerably among the various intelligence organizations. The CIA is generally satisfied with the existing procedures and considers the results adequate in most respects. Publication procurement results from Latin America and certain African countries have not been as successful as necessary for adequate intelligence support. In addition, delay in receipt of publications from all areas except the USSR appears to be a general complaint. DIA has found the heavy reliance on the attache system for procurement to be unacceptable from several standpoints. Primarily, the time of the attaches can be used to better advantage to accomplish tasks which can only be done by them; publication procurement can be done, in most cases, through other methods. Secondly, these other methods (PPO's, commercial purchase, exchanges, etc.) can provide for more efficient and economical results except for the hard-to-get items. Thus, DIA is directing changes as previously described. Air Force has found their multi-faceted approach quite satisfactory, as has NSA, except for the hard-to-get publications.

From a review of statistics on cost of procurement and time-lag for the different systems, it seems evident that commercial arrangements generally cut the time in half as compared with the PPO system and reduce the time even more compared with other systems. Overall costs to the Government of commercial procurement are somewhat less than the PPO system. However, commercial procurement costs more to an individual agency because it must absorb mailing costs; whereas in the PPO system, the State Department absorbs the mailing costs for all agencies.

Publication procurement can be categorized as involving:

1. subscription or specific order
2. field selection based on guide requirements and on-the-spot initiative and
3. indirect or irregular methods employed to procure other wise denied or "hard-to-get" publications.

Of the total volume of publications procured, 95% are in the first category comprising known serials and monographs. So the vast bulk of what we need constitutes a known and easily accessible body of documents that require a heavy daily volume flow from producer to consumer. For this vast volume

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the most direct, unencumbered route will obviously cut the time-lag and reduce costs, particularly hidden costs for the Government. Since these are well-known and accessible items, coordination in their procurement is unnecessary, time-consuming and costly. Therefore, insofar as feasible, direct to publisher subscriptions or commercial dealer arrangements should be made at the lowest administrative level possible for serials and monographs.

On the other hand, for field selection and hard-to-get items, there is an evident need for much closer coordination so as to eliminate duplicate activity and conserve and maximize the utilization of the most useful assets for the benefit of the whole Community. Guide requirements should be consolidated, carefully screened and appropriate portions placed with the most logical and best asset available, whether he be an attache, foreign service officer or commercial dealer. Similarly, hard-to-get items should be brought together into a consolidated want-list keyed to an intelligence priority list and apportioned to the most fruitful field assets. It appears to us that there exists a need for some mechanism for the central control of these items to insure the availability of these items to the elements of the Community requiring the data contained therein. At a minimum there should be an active working group or committee charged with the close on-going coordination of these two classes of publications procurement activity - selection and hard-to-get items. Such a group should, we feel, come under the direction of CODIB.

The Task Team has not, as yet, investigated the efforts of the Community directed toward the processing and exploitation of foreign publications but, until such time as we have completed our investigations, an interim working group on the procurement of these hard-to-get publications seems advisable.

C. Recommendations Concerning the Need for and Procurement of Foreign Publications.

We recommend that CODIB:

1. Note our findings that foreign publications continue to be today a vital and primary source for intelligence production - contributing on the average more than half of all sources to production.
2. Endorse the principle that, for serials and monographs from undenied areas, USIB agencies should choose procurement methods - PPO, commercial or other arrangements - most suitable to their particular requirements, e.g., adequacy of response, timeliness of response, security aspects, costs to the Government, etc.

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3. Establish a working group on hard-to-get publications to:

a. undertake coordination of want-lists and guide requirements, compilation of an inventory of assets available and collation of requirements and assets and

b. assess the problems involved in establishing central controls for procuring and accessioning of hard-to-get publications and make appropriate recommendations to CODIB.

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